

Message

From: Holt, Kay [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=60D01F6D16BB4D7FB1AD488C35448C40-HOLT, VANESSA KAY]
Sent: 5/9/2018 8:03:09 PM
To: Graff, Jaimie [Graff.Jaimie@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: Situational Awareness: Congressman wants answer from USDA on cats allegedly killed in gov research

V. Kay Holt | Deputy Director | National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory | Office of Research and Development | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Research Triangle Park, NC 27711 | Phone: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) | Cell: 919.724.2420 |

From: Coberly, Dan
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2018 2:34 PM
To: Graff, Jaimie <Graff.Jaimie@epa.gov>
Cc: Jones, Marjorie <Jones.Marjorie@epa.gov>; Holt, Kay <Holt.Kay@epa.gov>
Subject: Situational Awareness: Congressman wants answer from USDA on cats allegedly killed in gov research

Congressman wants answers from USDA on cats allegedly killed during government research

By [Juana Summers](#), CNN Updated 9:49 AM ET, Wed May 9, 2018

Washington (CNN)A Republican lawmaker wants answers from the Department of Agriculture about taxpayer-funded research experiments at a Maryland facility that have allegedly led to the deaths of hundreds of cats and kittens.

Citing documents reviewed by his office, Michigan Republican Mike Bishop described a decades-old research project at the USDA's Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland, in which hundreds of kittens are bred, fed meat that is infected with Toxoplasma, and later killed and discarded by "incineration." In a letter to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue dated Monday, Bishop wrote that he was "shocked to hear that the USDA, the very organization set out to enforce animal welfare laws and regulations, was treating the life of animals with such contempt."

Bishop went on to say that it appears that the USDA project "uses kittens as test tubes."

"Put simply, it creates life to destroy life," he added. "While I support the objective of making food safer and protecting people and animals from infectious diseases, we must ensure taxpayer dollars are used effectively, efficiently and humanely."

The animal rights advocacy group White Coat Waste Project said it obtained details about the research under the Freedom of Information Act.

In response to a CNN inquiry, a spokesperson for the Agricultural Research Service said that the estimate of 100 cats used in USDA research was a "serious over estimation" and called cats "essential to the success of this critical research."

"The Agricultural Research Service-USDA (ARS) makes every effort to minimize the number of cats used to produce eggs required to research one of the most widespread parasites in the world. The cats are essential to the success of this critical research," the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also said that USDA doesn't seek adoptions of the cats used in the research because of the potential risks to adoptive families.

"Our goal is to reduce the spread of toxoplasmosis. Adopting laboratory cats could, unfortunately, undermine that goal, potentially causing severe infections, especially with unborn children or those with immunodeficiencies," the spokesperson said. "ARS regularly inspects research animals and complies with best management practices in animal research."

CORRECTION: This story has been updated to add a missing word to a quote from a spokesperson for the Agricultural Research Service. The spokesperson said the estimate of a 100 cats being used for research was a "serious over estimation."

Dan Coberly

Senior Advisor, ORD National Communications;
NHEERL Senior National Communication Advisor,
Office of Research and Development
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Research Triangle Park, NC 27711
Ph: 919.541.5158 c: inactivated/cost saving action

Visit our website at www.epa.gov/ord/